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Gender and the Local Expression of Authority in Philippe de Vigneulles's Metz

Abstract : In this essay I explore themes of female authority and peacemaking in the Chronique, through the lenses of war, theater, and marriage. In 1468, according to Philippe, a nobleman named Henri de la Tour married a young girl whom he had seen perform the role of Catherine of Siena onstage. An evaluation of the episode in light of new evidence from its textual sources reveals a carefully shaped story that draws upon historical context and past narrative events in order to create a peaceful resolution for a decades-old conflict with the de la Tour family. Through the development of three characters named Catherine – the saint, the actor, and the play's female patron – Philippe promotes a model of power and sanctity that unites contemporary ideas about successful political negotiation with women's urban religious devotion. The saint and her living representatives redeem a militaristic villain at the same time that the text concludes a larger narrative arc about the healing of old wounds.

Résumé : Dans cet essai, j'explore les thèmes de la paix et de l'autorité des femmes dans la Chronique, à travers les perspectives de la guerre, du théâtre, et du mariage. En 1468, selon Philippe, un noble nommé Henri de la Tour a épousé une jeune fille qu'il avait vue jouer le rôle de Catherine de Sienne. Une évaluation de l'épisode à la lumière de nouvelles preuves de ses sources textuelles révèle une histoire soigneusement agencée qui s'appuie sur le contexte historique et le récit des événements passés afin de créer une solution pacifique à un vieux conflit avec la famille de la Tour. Grâce à l'élaboration de trois personnages au nom de Catherine – la sainte, l'actrice, et la mécène de la pièce – Philippe promeut un modèle de puissance et de sainteté qui unit les idées contemporaines de la négociation politique avec la dévotion religieuse des femmes urbaines. La sainte et ses représentantes sauvent un méchant militariste en même temps que le texte termine un arc narratif plus large portant sur la guérison de vieilles blessures.

War stories often produce compelling drama : heroes and villains in conflict, eventually reaching a hard-won peace. In Philippe de Vigneulles's *Chronique*, however, military clashes do not always drive the narrative that he creates about his beloved city's history. In the early fifteenth century, Metz found itself entangled in a war with the de la Tour family, yet the *Chronique* shows little interest in recounting its many battles and diplomatic negotiations. Philippe's text briefly describes the commencement of hostilities, but devotes no attention to the consequent struggle and its conclusion. Instead, Philippe colors the legacy of this war through the depiction of two events that took place later in the century: a marriage and a play. In 1468, according to Philippe, the noble Henri de la Tour married a beautiful young woman whom he had seen onstage acting the role of Catherine of Siena in a performance that had been sponsored by a local woman. On the surface, this story presents a simple romance with a happy ending. However, Philippe also situates the episode within a broad storyline of conflict resolution that draws upon contemporary history and the *Chronique* as a whole. He intertwines the female figures with the

history of the de la Tours by developing and elaborating on his sources. Philippe uses the women's characters to create an alternate authority, derived from notions of gender and female sanctity, that heals and diffuses the old enmities of war.

The de la Tours : War and Redemption

In the early years of the fifteenth century, a dispute emerged between the de la Tour family and the city over regional territorial claims. From roughly 1415 to 1429, Wainchelin and Henri de la Tour fought with Metz's citizens over multiple issues, including the status of the fortress of Saulcy, located on the Île de Saulcy, between the branches of the Moselle river that skirt Metz. The destruction of the fortress contributed to deteriorating relations between the two parties. Henri had agreed in 1411 not to take up arms against the city, but the dynamic of regional conflict proved difficult to escape and open warfare broke out in 1415/16¹. The next decade saw a stream of attacks, diplomatic efforts, and treaties. Peace with Wainchelin was proclaimed in 1419, but by 1421 Metz was again at war with Henri². Another four years passed before the parties agreed to arbitration, which led to the signing of another peace in 1426³. This effort succeeded, finally : among other things, it levied payments for damages, a solution that seems to have resolved any lingering hostilities. From this point onward, the formerly despicable de la Tours were welcomed as allies and honored guests of the city.

Philippe's *Chronique* presents a highly abbreviated and incomplete picture of these events. Following his usual methods, Philippe draws on narrative sources and abridges them heavily in order to retell the story⁴. The war with the de la Tour family fills a single paragraph of the *Chronique*, tucked in amid news of tumult in France and Europe. The passage is animated by the figure of Henri de la Tour, who makes his first appearance in the text. He strides into the pages of the *Chronique* as a predator, attacking Metz in 1416 without justification :

Ung jantilz homme, nommés sire Hanry de la Tour, qui estoit ung très malvais guerson et ung parfait tirans, celluy Hanry fist en ce tampts grand guerre contre la bonne cité de Mets, et sans cause nul [...] ⁵.

Philippe frames the conflict between Metz and its enemy in the simple language of a good city fighting the perfect tyrant and defending itself against Henri's baseless, mercenary aggression. The wording firmly establishes the character of the antagonist at the same time that it minimizes the Messine provocations to war. The remainder of the passage also shows bias in favor of Metz, reporting that Henri's

¹ Archives Municipales de Metz AA.50.4, EE.2.4.1-4. Hereafter AMM.

² AMM AA.50.24, EE.2.5.1-2

³ AMM AA.50.32, AA.50.34.

⁴ For a general survey of the *Chronique* and Philippe's historical methods, see P. Demarolle, *La Chronique de Philippe de Vigneulles et la mémoire de Metz*, Caen, Editions Paradigme, 1993.

⁵ Philippe de Vigneulles, *La Chronique de Philippe de Vigneulles*, ed. C. Bruneau, 4 vols., (*Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de la Lorraine, Documents 14-17*), Metz, 1927-33, vol. 2, p. 169.

attack was prompted «fort seullement» by the assistance of the city in the destruction of the Saulcy fortress⁶. Despite offering this colorful introduction, however, Philippe omits the remainder of the campaign and its conclusion from his telling of subsequent decades. The effect is to minimize and/or eliminate the extent of the war, its deeper causes, and its eventual termination from the greater history of the *Chronique*. Philippe thus leaves the reader with a picture of Henri de la Tour as a villain who looms over the city as an unresolved threat.

Henri makes an unexpected reappearance in the *Chronique*, however, two decades later when he surfaces in the narrative in greatly different circumstances. This time, Henri is named as a member of the audience at a performance of the *Mystère de Notre Seigneur* in Metz in 1437. Philippe writes: «Et y avoir pour celluy tampts moult de noble seigneurs et de damme estrangers et privée en la cité de Mets...Henry de la Tour»⁷. In a reversal of Henri's previous status as enemy, Philippe situates Henri among the honored elites who have descended on the city in order to enjoy the religious spectacle. Since he omits any mention of this figure in the years between the outset of the war and the performance, this presents the reader with an abrupt change in his standing. Because the de la Tour lords had made peace with Metz in the 1420s, the passage accurately reflects the contemporary historical relationship between the two groups. Indeed, Henri's presence at the *mystère* probably helped to cement amicable ties. Yet, in the context of Philippe's abridgement of the war, Henri's friendly presence is confusing and disrupts the identity previously created for him in the *Chronique*. The contrast between the earlier and later Henri would stand out in stark relief, especially to those readers who knew of the de la Tours's strong support for Metz during Charles VII's mid-century siege of the city⁸. By the time of the *Chronique*'s composition, the de la Tours were remembered more by the citizens of Metz as useful allies than as transgressors. At this point in the text, an attentive reader would be left with an unresolved story arc about the war and an impression of Henri de la Tour as a confusing character with conflicting aims.

The Saintly Bride and the de la Tour Bridegroom

For the reader who persevered, however, Philippe offered a solution. His text carries the thread of this character onward, eventually thrusting Henri to the forefront once more⁹. In a noteworthy episode from the year 1468, Henri marries the star of a *mystère* performed in honor of Catherine of Siena. Because no play script

⁶ «...Fort seullement pour ce que les seigneurs d'icelle avoient aydiés à abatre une forteresse appellée le Saulcy». *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 169-70.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 245.

⁸ AMM AA.51.17. The support of Wainchelin during the war went far in redeeming the family in the eyes of the citizens of Metz. Philippe reflects this in his mention of assistance rendered «à la prières et requeste de Hanry de la Tour». Vigneulles, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 281.

⁹ Henri appears sporadically in the text in the intervening years as a supporting character.

has survived, Philippe's description of the event has provided the basis for much scholarly speculation¹⁰. His account emphasizes the elements of human interest :

Item, en la dicte année [1468], fut fait et jués en Mets le jeu de ma damme sainte Katherine de Senne, vraye religieuse de l'ordre des Jacopins. Et fut ce jeu fait en la court des Grant Proicheurs, parmy les trois feste de la Panthecouste. Et, pour le faire, en furent abatue les estaige qui estoient couvert tout en l'antours encontre la muraille, et qui courvroie les ancienne épitaffle et sépulture. Et le fist faire et juer damme Katherine Baudoches à ses frais et despans. Et gist ycelle damme ou dit Grant Prescheurs, en la chaipelle qu'elle fist faire et fonder, qui est scituée en l'entrée d'icelle église et fondée on non de la dicte sainte Katherine. Et pourait le parsonnage de sainte Katherine une jonne fillette, aagée de environ XVIII ans, laquelle estoit fille à Dediet le Woierier ; et fist merveilleusement bien son devoir, au grés et plaisir d'ung chacun. Toutefois, avoit ladite fille XXIIIc vers de parsonnage, mais néanmoins elle les sçavoit tout sus le doyt. Et parloit celle fille cy vivement et piteusement qu'elle provocquoit plusieurs gens à pleurer, et estoit agréable à toute gens. Et, à l'occasion de ce, fut celle fille richement mariée à ung jantilz homme, soldoieurs de Mets, appellés Henry de la Tour, qui d'elle s'enamourait par le grant plaisir qu'il y print¹¹.

Philippe depicts Henri de la Tour as attending a second performance in Metz, thirty-one years after his last appearance at the theater. This time, however, Henri is not a mere name on the guest list : according to the text, the gentleman assumes a leading role by marrying the Catherine actor. Previous scholarship has pointed to some of the problematic elements of this episode : Henri's purported age at the time of this marriage, for example¹². So it is clear that the passage cannot be taken as a strictly accurate account of events. As he does elsewhere in the *Chronique*, Philippe imparts fictional touches and embellishments to the anecdote in an effort to produce a satisfying story that reflects well on Metz. By looking at the ways that the text departs from its sources and the historical record in service of its author's goals, we begin to see a bigger picture. Philippe's additions and emendations do construct a romance for Henri and the Catherine actor, but his larger goals encompass more than a simple love story. An examination of the full *Chronique* and of his sources reveals

¹⁰ See, for example, « Lusting After Saints », J. Enders, *Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002, p. 17-28.

¹¹ Vigneulles, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 394-5. For the broader themes of marriage and the theater in Philippe, see P. Demarolle, « Le Thème du mariage chez Philippe de Vigneulles, chroniqueur et conteur », *Le Mariage dans l'Europe des XVe et XVIe siècles : Réalités et représentations*, ed. R. Crescenzo, M. Roig-Miranda, and V. Saercherr, Nancy, Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 2003, and P. Demarolle, « Le 'Jeu' chez Philippe de Vigneulles (1471-1528) : Du Spectacle au miracle », *Theatralia : Du Texte au spectacle*, ed. M. Felska, Lublin, Wydawnicattwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2007.

¹² Assuming a minimum age of 20 at the onset of the war, the historical Henry would have been over 80 ! For a discussion of the fictional aspects of this episode, see Enders, *Death by Drama*, p. 17-28.

that Philippe uses this passage to anchor and conclude a more complicated history and narrative arc than previously has been understood.

The earliest surviving description of the play and marriage is found in the *Journal* of Jehan Aubrion, which records in two separate entries the events described by Philippe :

1468 : À la Pantecoste, on fist le jeu de Ste. Katerine de Senne, au Proichours. Et fuit Ste. Katerine une jonne fille, la fille Didiés le Werriés, du Four du Clostre.

1473 : Item, en la dite année, on moix d'octobre, fiancet une fille appelée Ste Katerine de Sene laquelle estoit fille Didiés, le Werriés, le cherton ; et fuit son espousés Andrea de la Tour, soldiour¹³.

Aubrion's version provides a basic, unornamented account that was written roughly contemporaneously with events. The first entry briefly notes the performance of a Catherine play in Metz in 1468, specifying a spring date, its location, and the identity of the main actor : a young woman who is the daughter of a man who resides on *Four du Clostre* street within the city. The second entry, for the year 1473, records the autumn marriage of this young woman to a soldier named Andrea de la Tour. It adds that she is now called Catherine of Siena, after the saint, and that her father is a carter by profession.

Aubrion's text supplies a version of events that differs from the *Chronique* in several important ways. Most obvious is the lack of episodic unity : the play and marriage are separate occurrences that take place in different years, and no connection is made between the two other than the identification of the bride as the Catherine actor. This version is also much more basic : the text omits staging and production details, recording only the season and locale of the performance. Furthermore, unlike in Philippe's *Chronique*, Aubrion's groom is a simple soldier named Andrea de la Tour. The *Journal* preserves the earliest record of events, so it probably offers the most reliable guide to the historical participants. This hitherto unknown evidence provides a shock to the scholar who previously has relied on Philippe's version : the groom was not a nobleman named Henri, but was instead a common soldier named Andrea who held the not-uncommon surname of de la Tour. Sixty years after his first treaty with Metz, the Henri who warred with the city probably was dead ; despite the evidence of Philippe's *Chronique*, the historical figure of Henri de la Tour had no connection to the play or the marriage.

How did Philippe come to write Henri into his theatrical romance, then ? Analysis of Jacomin Husson's *Chronique*, another narrative source for the episode, suggests a further stage in the story's development prior to its inclusion in Philippe's *Chronique*. Husson drew upon Aubrion and other chroniclers in his depiction of this era, and was in turn read by Philippe¹⁴. His text thus might be positioned between those of Aubrion and Philippe in terms of both chronological composition and story

¹³ Jehan Aubrion, *Journal de Jehan Aubrion, bourgeois de Metz, avec sa continuation par Pierre Aubrion, 1465 - 1512*, ed. E. L. Larchey, Metz, 1857, p. 29, 44-5.

¹⁴ For Husson's sources and methods, see J. Husson, *Chronique de Metz de Jacomin Husson, 1200-1525*, ed. H. Michelant, Metz, Rousseau-Pallez, 1870, p. ii-iii.

development, though no direct line can be posited. In structure and content, it offers a version more complex than Aubrion and less elaborate than Philippe. Husson fuses together the separate entries of Aubrion, and adds some supporting details to a now-unified narrative of the play and the marriage :

Item, en ladite année [1468] fut fait le jeu de sainte Katherine de Sienne as Proichours permeys les iii festes de la Penthecouste et le fit faire dame Katherine Baudouche à ses frais et fist une jonne fille de environ xviii ans sainte Katherine, qui merueilleusement fit bien son devoir et ses personnaiges, et xxiii. c. vers de personnaige ; et pleust mont à beaucoup de gens, et en fuit mariée à ung soldior appelé Henry de la Tour qui d'elle s'en emourait pour le grant plaisir qu'il y print¹⁵.

Although the wording differs, the facts of Husson's text are in basic agreement with Aubrion's. He repeats that Catherine of Siena was played by a young woman at the Dominican house during Pentecost, and that she married a soldier named de la Tour. The many differences of phrasing and detail suggest, however, that Aubrion's text is not the direct source for this passage. Husson's *Chronique* adds to Aubrion's version in several important ways : the « jeu » was done at the expense of a lady named Catherine Baudouche ; the actor is eighteen years old ; the role required 2300 lines ; the performance provoked such love in the groom that he was inspired to marriage. These details flesh out the supporting characters, particularly the patron and actor. Yet Husson also omits some elements, such as the name of the actor's father. Furthermore, the groom's name has changed from Andrea to Henri. Could this be the result of an auditory slip or an authorial edit¹⁶ ? Whatever the reason, Husson's text might be the source for Philippe's mistaken identification of Henri de la Tour as the groom.

Husson introduces another innovation, as well : the conflation of the play of 1468 with the wedding of 1473. He elides the five-year gap between the two events and, through the additional descriptive material, creates a causal connection between the performance and the marriage that situates Henri de la Tour in the 1468 audience. Like the name change, the reason for the difference is unclear ; Husson may have drawn from a source other than Aubrion, or himself edited the timeline for the purposes of narrative coherence. The final result of Husson's additions and subtractions, however, is the linkage of certain characters (Henri de la Tour, the Catherine actor, Catherine Baudouche) and events (the Catherine *mystère*, the marriage) in order to create a single, consistent episode.

Philippe's *Chronique* builds upon this basic framework and elaborates upon the events as a unified story. Its version is closer to Husson than to Aubrion textually, though it contains unique elements from each author. An examination of Philippe's version in comparison with Aubrion and Husson reveals that Philippe draws heavily from Husson, or from a shared source, but that he also incorporates

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

¹⁶ Although the names Henri and Andrea sound similar, the difference in their spelling suggest that Husson, or his source, obtained the name in an oral context. Alternatively, an author who remembered that Henri de la Tour had attended the 1437 play could have « corrected » Andrea to Henri.

substantial amounts of original material. In the following passage, underlining marks where Philippe's phrasing mirrors Aubrion and Husson ; content unique to Philippe is rendered in bold :

Item, en la dicte année, fut fait et jués en Mets le jeu de ma damme sainte Katherine de Senne, vraye religieuse de l'ordre des Jacopins. Et fut ce jeu fait en la court des Grant Proicheurs, parmy les trois feste de la Panthecouste. Et, pour le faire, en furent abatue les estaige qui estoient couvert tout en l'antours encontre la muraille, et qui courvroie les ancienne épitaifle et sépulture. Et le fist faire et juer damme Katherine Baudoches à ses frais et despans. Et gist ycelle damme ou dit Grant Prescheurs, en la chaipelle qu'elle fist faire et fonder, qui est scituée en l'entrée d'icelle église et fondée on non de la dicte sainte Katherine. Et pourtait le parsonnaige de sainte Katherine une bonne fillette, aagée de environ XVIII ans, laquelle estoit fille à Dediect le Woier ; et fist merueilleusement bien son debvoir, au grés et plaisir d'ung chacun. Toutefois, avoit ladicte fille XXIIIc vers de parsonnaige, mais néanmoins elle les sçavoit tout sus le doyt. Et parloit celle fille cy vivement et piteusement qu'elle provoquoit plusieurs gens à pleurer, et estoit agréable à toute gens. Et, à l'occasion de ce, fut celle fille richement mariée à ung jantilz homme, soldoieurs de Mets, appellés Henry de la Tour, qui d'elle s'enamourait par le grant plaisir qu'il y print.

Philippe reproduces Husson's episode nearly in its entirety, adopting its structure and interweaving large chunks of the text with his own. Both authors describe the play as being performed « permey les iii festes de la Penthecouste / parmy les trois feste de la Panthecouste », for example, and the actor as « de environ xviii ans/de environ XVIII ans ». Though Philippe rarely alters Husson's terminology, he often builds upon its basic form. In his description of the play's patron, for example, Philippe replicates Husson but also adds two descriptive words that repeat and reinforce the meaning of the existing lines : « Et le fit faire dame Katherine Baudoches à ses frais / Et le fist faire **et juer** damme Katherine Baudoches à ses frais **et despans.** » Some of Philippe's distinctive emphasis stems from this sort of embellishment in which he echoes another text.

Not all of the new phrasing reiterates Philippe's sources, however. A simple comparison of the *Chronique* with Aubrion's *Journal* reveals that although Philippe reports many of the facts given by Aubrion, the overall impact of the *Journal* on Philippe's text is minimal. Furthermore, Philippe's version of the story adjoins many new details to Husson, both factual and interpretive. So although Philippe adopts most of Husson's text, his version contains lines of unidentified provenance that are absent from both Husson and Aubrion. Some of the additions correspond to Philippe's amplification of the existing text, while others take the form of contextual expansions that supply the reader with historical or biographical background. This material, in particular, reveals Philippe's contribution to the meaning of the theater-wedding story.

When compared to the evidence of the earlier versions, Philippe's special attention to the character of Henri de la Tour becomes readily apparent. According to Aubrion, Andrea de la Tour was a mere « soldiour » who married a former actor,

the daughter of a carter : « soldior » indicates that he is a mercenary and lower man-at-arms who fights for wages. In Husson, the groom has become Henri de la Tour, who was driven to love by the pleasure he took from a performance : « Et en fuit mariée à ung soldior appelé Hanry de la Tour qui d'elle s'en emourait pour le grant plaisir qu'il y print. » Despite the change of name and the new emotional motivation, however, Henri remains a simple « soldior ». The citizens of Metz regularly employed companies of such men from both French and German-speaking lands to fight their wars ; Aubrion and Husson's soldier would have been a familiar sight within the city. In the hands of Philippe, however, this figure is transformed : « Et, à l'occasion de ce, fut elle richement mariée à ung jantilz homme, soldoieurs de Mets, appellés Henry de la Tour, qui d'elle s'enamourait par le grant plaisir qu'il y print ». The text maximizes the status of Henri's profession by identifying him as a « soldoieurs de Mets », and thus as being affiliated more closely with the city. It also titles Henri as a « jantilz homme », bestowing on him the elite standing of a gentleman. Furthermore, the young woman is no longer simply « mariée », but now is « richement mariée », suggesting the wealth of the groom¹⁷. Taken altogether, these small changes elevate and enrich the Henri character. They ennoble the once-humble groom of Aubrion and Husson and elevate him to the social position of the formerly villainous, historical Henri de la Tour.

Textual and Historical Catherines

Philippe's attention to the figure of Henri suggests that his elaborations upon Husson and Aubrion merit broader scrutiny. In particular, Philippe develops the three Catherines : the actor, the saint and her play, and its patron. His numerous changes to these characters contribute to the construction of a unified model of female urban identity within the text. Philippe's presentation of the Saint Catherine actor departs from the tone of his sources the least, but it nonetheless demonstrates the perceived importance of female physicality. His contributions to this character expand upon the actor's dramatic abilities, citing the enjoyment that she brings to all through her lively and touching performance. As the daughter of a carter, a modest family background, she must have earned the part through performance ability or looks, rather than nepotism. She and her father have left no deeper trace in the *Chronique* or in the historical record, however. Given her role in the episode, and Philippe's focus on her impact upon the audience, the actor probably was unimportant to him as an individual. Instead, she serves to make Catherine of Siena physically present and to bring Henri de la Tour together with a representation of the saint.

Saint Catherine figures prominently in the text as a figure who is associated closely with the Dominican order but makes herself available to all. Philippe refers to the saint with affection, calling her « ma damme », and adds that she is a « vraye religieuse de l'ordre des Jacopins ». This emphasis upon the personal and true nature of her calling primes the reader to accept the saint's attributes as real and effective. Philippe goes on to specify that the Catherine play was performed in the courtyard

¹⁷ An extremely abbreviated redeposition of the marriage, included among the 1472 entries, reinforces Philippe's elevation of the event by describing the bride as « haultement mariée, elle qui estoit povre fille ». Vigneulles, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 413.

of the Dominicans, after the removal of structures that had covered up the epitaphs and sepulchres. The history of this space within Metz and Philippe's involvement with the theater supports the possible truth of this staging detail. The « court », an open cemetery attached to the Dominican house, was a semi-public space used for preaching and other performances until its destruction in 1542¹⁸. Philippe's discussion of the architecture of the setting thus highlights the public nature of the performance, while firmly situating it within the topography of Metz. It also reinforces the role of the Dominicans in promoting Saint Catherine at the same time that it reinforces her physical and spiritual accessibility to all Messine citizens.

Philippe further expands on the conjunction of public sanctity with gender and the preaching order through his comments on Catherine Baudoche, the patron of the play. He repeats Husson's assertion that Catherine Baudoche had the performance done at her expense, and adds that she is buried in a chapel that she founded in the name of Catherine of Siena at the entrance to the Dominican church. Both items suggest that the lay Catherine shared a deep connection to the community that was concretized through donations to the holy Catherine. Yet the burial detail is inaccurate: Catherine Baudoche's epitaph decorates a pillar in her parish church of Saint-Martin, where she was buried. This error nonetheless illuminates Philippe's goals, as it shows his desire to strengthen the relationships among Saint Catherine, the Dominicans, and the lay Catherine. Just as he fleshed out Catherine of Siena with historical detail, Philippe explains Catherine Baudoche's deeper connections to the Dominican community by situating her personal patronage within a wider program of devotion to the saint.

The history of these two Catherine's provides a deeply meaningful backdrop to Philippe's depiction of the play and the marriage, as well as the story of Henri de la Tour. Although Catherine of Siena lived during the fourteenth century, she received papal canonization in 1461, only seven years before the Metz performance in her honor. A play that celebrated her life and holiness would have been one of many methods by which the Dominican order promoted the worship of their newest saint in Metz. Catherine of Siena demonstrated many conventional aspects of female sanctity during her life, working as a tertiary under the guidance of the Dominicans. Her commitment to the poor did not prevent her from participating in the public and political spheres, however¹⁹. She mediated among the warring Italian city-states and toiled to return the fractured papacy to Rome, for example. These varied activities increased her appeal to urban dwellers, particularly women, to whom she seemed particularly relevant and familiar. Catherine of Siena offered a new model of sanctity that encouraged engagement with the world and suggested a role for women in the peacemaking process.

Following the example of Saint Catherine herself, women were not mere spectators at the Metz play that celebrated her life. Women's participation in the

¹⁸ Special thanks to M. Pierre-Edouard Wagner for sharing this information in a private communication.

¹⁹ For Catherine of Siena's political activity, see F. T. Luongo, *The Sainly Politics of Catherine of Siena*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2006.

medieval theater was unusual, and Philippe's emphasis upon it also is distinctive²⁰. Noblewomen frequently controlled powerful patronage networks, but women of the merchant class are rarely visible as individual customers for fifteenth-century artistic production. Yet in the *Chronique*, Philippe elaborates upon the Catherine play's female patron, a wealthy member of Metz's elite. The evidence of Catherine Baudoche's contribution to the devotional performance about Catherine of Siena reinforces the idea that a special connection existed between the living woman and the saintly figure, and demonstrates Philippe's recognition of such.

The historical Catherine Baudoche was remarkable: affluent, influential, and a contributor to Messine culture in multiple areas. Born into the powerful Gronnaix family, she married into two other leading patrician families. She benefited from an unusual economic freedom, despite her sex, that stemmed from the money and prestige of her background. Even before being widowed, Catherine controlled her own properties and finances²¹. Upon the death of her second husband in 1465, however, she appears to have embarked upon a campaign of patronage that was spread broadly across local religious culture. Her 1472 will reserves funds for Notre Dame masses and vigils to be held in her parish church of Saint Martin, for example, an outgrowth of her active participation in its Notre Dame confraternity²². Each of these activities reflects the assertion of personal power through local financial control. Her support for the Saint Catherine play should be interpreted as an expression of her public self, therefore, as well as a devotional act. Once widowed, Catherine Baudoche's support for performance – both liturgical and dramatic – served to express her unique identity and authority to her fellow citizens of Metz.

For such a woman, Catherine of Siena must have seemed a potent choice as protector and exemplar. In affiliating herself with the saint through performance, Catherine Baudoche openly laid claim to selected attributes that would be desirable to a wealthy urban widow. The saint demonstrated the traditional virtues of humility and charity, securing her basic goodness. Saint Catherine gave generously to her fellow citizens of her time, just as Catherine Baudoche offered her time and money. The saint also revealed an impressive intelligence, despite the lack of formal schooling that was shared by many contemporary women. Most unusually, Catherine of Siena wielded her influence in order to act as a diplomat who mended political rifts as easily as she healed the sick. The saint held more power than many men in her town and employed it to great effect within her chosen sphere – as did Catherine Baudoche.

Female Authority and Civic Harmony

In his retelling of the 1468 play and marriage, Philippe brings the Catherines to the forefront and joins their fates to that of Henri de la Tour. His version

²⁰ Until quite recently, drama scholarship held that women were excluded from the medieval theater, except as audience-members.

²¹ For example, Catherine controlled properties that were held in tenure from John II, Duke of Lorraine and Calabria. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Lorraine 231.57-58.

²² Archives Départementales de la Moselle G2305.6. Catherine also made donations to a local monastery in support of weekly masses: the masses honored John the Evangelist, the patron saint of the monastery of Saint-Arnoul. AD de la Moselle H7.13.

intertwines the historical and textual Catherines, playing up their sanctity and authority in order to create deeper meanings. He gives the reader a satisfying tale: the romance and its narrative of love triumphant. Yet Philippe also embeds his characters within a context of religious expression, power, and unresolved conflict. Through the character of Henri, he situates the occasion within a larger historical narrative. The conflation of the early century nobleman with the 1468 groom reaches back to an older conflict. The 1468 episode thus repeats and amplifies the conciliatory presence of Henri de la Tour at the 1437 performance of the *Mystère de Nostre Seigneur*. Although the war with the de la Tours had ended «offstage» Philippe nonetheless reaches a true resolution. Henri's character had been a villain, but he is transformed by the power of theater and of love.

In the *Chronique*, a subtle social healing is accomplished through the graces of the three Catherines. They embody a model of conflict resolution that associates female sanctity with political negotiation. As a narrative method, it allows for Henri's reintegration into the local Messine population. His crimes are forgiven and he is accepted into the social community through his marriage to a saint. The holy woman that is chosen, however, expresses urban, public, female power. Philippe's enrichment of the characters thus transforms the story from a solitary dramatic episode to a larger reflection on what it means to end a war. He redeems Henri, demonstrating the power of religious performance to unite and transform. Philippe makes Catherine of Siena more fully present in the play and its aftermath, and invokes a pattern of religious identity that Catherine Baudoche herself imitated. The historical Catherine is made to take on the saint's role – not as actor, but as a peacemaker who negotiates a safe space for reconciliation. In the end, Philippe's version creates an ensemble of interlinked characters in order to portray a gendered depiction of peace. Philippe does not merely tell a fairy tale, but also argues for the significance of female authority and action in the soothing of old conflicts.

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